provocation; large, -untidy head lolling, tired eyes unseeing, thoughts withdrawn from this so familiar scene—faces ranged round a littered table while one spoke.

The Twelve's business was to prevent war; and as they saw no means, and were even, perhaps, little inclined to prevent Japanese and Chinese from killing one another, they achieved their object by beginning, like a Euclid proposition, with an assumption—let there be no war. In making this convenient assumption they were assisted by the fact that no declaration of war was made by either side. If the League had prevented no wars, it may at least claim to have prevented declarations of war. The word 'war' was scrupulously avoided; the nearest approach made to it being a declaration that 'there was a very considerable military element in Japanese activities.' Tension, yes, conflict even; but never that terrible word—'war', whose use would have had as devastating an effect on their proceedings as the small boy's cry, 'He's naked!' in the fairy story about the vain emperor who thought he was exquisitely clothed in garments only visible to the righteous.

The tension or conflict was in any case far away, and seemed to affect little the interests of the Twelve who had been entrusted with the task of settling it. They preferred to let events take their course, confining their efforts to occupying the intervals between one decisive event and another with suitable discussions and proposals. These delaying tactics were furthered by Mr. Matsuoka, the Japanese delegate, who showed great ingenuity in raising technical objections to whatever was proposed, falling back occasionally on the simple, but effective

device of unexpectedly making a speech in Japanese, and who was tactful enough ever to insist that the Government he represented had no wish but scrupulously to maintain 'the principles of the Covenant and the Kellogg pact,' that 'Japanese military action in Manchuria was an act of self-defence,' and that 'the League had no more loyal servant than Japan.'[4] His sense of the righteous-

[4] It might be supposed that such assertions, while accepted at Geneva as evidence of tact, would have met with a sceptical reception elsewhere. On